DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 418 945 SP 037 910

AUTHOR Peters, William H.; Dossey, Glenda
TITLE Developing Successful Teacher Education Collaboration in Research Universities.
PUB DATE 1998-02-28
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (New Orleans, LA, February 25-28, 1998).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College School Cooperation; Cooperation; *Cooperative Planning; Educational Change; Field Experience Programs; Higher Education; Preservice Teacher Education; *Professional Development Schools; *Research Universities; Secondary Education; Student Teacher Attitudes; Student Teachers; Student Teaching; Teacher Collaboration
IDENTIFIERS Texas A and M University

ABSTRACT

Texas A&M University developed a secondary education collaborative model leading to the redesign of the secondary education teacher preservice preparation program. Phase 1 provided for self-directed experiences with adolescents. Phase 2 established an understanding of teaching and schools in modern society. Phase 3 focused on developing skills to meet the needs of society and students. Phase 4 required the development and demonstration of skills to organize content and technology for use in classrooms. Early in the redesign process, the program committed to connecting university content and pedagogical knowledge to classroom teaching problems. Classroom connections between university and public schools became an integral part of the program from the beginning to the completion of student teaching. This required a field-based approach. Pilot classes occurred onsite in junior and senior high school settings. Pilot studies tested the redesign structure and collaborative framework. Surveys evaluated student perceptions of the pilot classes. Results indicated that the students viewed the field based courses as very important. Students felt that because of the experience they could make a commitment to the principles of professional, moral, and ethical behavior expected of teachers. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 418 945

DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL TEACHER EDUCATION COLLABORATION IN RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

presented by

William H. Peters
Texas A&M University

and

Glenda Dossey
Westfield High School

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

New Orleans, Louisiana

February 1998

SB 37910

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

W. Peters

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL TEACHER EDUCATION COLLABORATION IN RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Introduction

The face of education in the United States has been rapidly changing over the past decade. Changes in demographics and societal forces have produced classrooms comprised of students with diverse sets of needs, backgrounds, and educational goals. For example, the chief demographer for the Texas State Data Center projects that by the year 2030, the white population in Texas will constitute 36.7 percent of the state's population, as compared to the current 60.7 percent. The black population is expected to dip from 11.7 to 9.5 percent, while the Hispanic population is projected to be 45.9 percent as compared to the 25.5 percent of the current population. Other ethnicity's that currently make up 2.1 percent of the state's population are projected to be 7.9 percent (the Bryan/College Station Eagle). The reform of "inclusion" mainstreams *all* children (those who are limited-English proficient, academically talented, and behaviorally, physically, and mentally challenged) into the public school classroom. New curriculum and evaluation standards are drivers of curriculum reform and interdisciplinary teaming is encouraged. Site-based management confronts teachers with new roles. Integrating technology into the classroom learning and teaching environment challenges teachers. Such forces have made changes in teacher education necessary, particularly in states where changes have been mandated without time for proper preparation. In 1988, Hawley, Austin and Goldman found that mandated changes in teacher education in 15 southern states were initiated by state legislators or state boards of education. Such top-down changes have occurred in spite of calls for collaboration in improving educational excellence (Maeroff, 1983; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Secondary Education Collaborative

Clift and Say (1988) define collaboration "as the joint efforts of university faculty members and public school personnel to design and provide opportunities to improve teaching and teacher education (p. 2)." It is this definition that became the foundation for the development of a Texas A&M University secondary education collaborative model leading to the redesign of the secondary education preservice teacher preparation program. To initiate such collaboration, the secondary education faculty sponsored an invitational conference in March 1993 in the board room of a local independent school district. Great care was taken to ensure representation of all stakeholders in secondary teacher preparation. Invited members included representatives from each of the content disciplines offering teaching fields in the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Science, the College of Geoscience, and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences; representatives associated with teacher education from throughout the College of Education; practicing teachers from middle and senior schools from each of the teaching fields and representing various area school districts; and principals and assistant principals and central office personnel representing various school districts. It was out of this invitational conference that the Secondary Education Collaborative was born. Its first general meeting was held in September 1993.

The organizational structure for redesigning the program evolved from the wishes of the collaborative at each of its general meetings. This structure included a nine member proposal planning committee with invited consultants; phase development teams composed of a middle school/junior high school teacher, a high school teacher, a public school administrator, a professor from an academic discipline, a secondary education professor, a teacher education student at the level of student teaching; and an oversight committee composed of representation from the planning committee and the phase development teams.

The proposal planning committee was responsible for devising a framework for the redesign which was then approved by the total membership of the collaborative (January

1994). After the phase development teams responsible for further development of each of the phases in the framework were created, their suggestions were reviewed and approved by the collaborative (May 1994). The oversight committee was responsible for translating the plan into courses compatible with the university structure (October 1994). Upon final approval of the full redesign by the collaborative (November 1994), the plan was presented to the TAMU faculty for approval (December 1994). The secondary education faculty was responsible for securing approval at the various levels of the university and the state (1995-1996).

Redesigned Secondary Program

Phase one provides for self-directed experiences with adolescents, phase two establishes an understanding of teaching and schools in modern society, phase three focuses on developing skills to meet the needs of society and students, and phase four requires the development and demonstration of skills to organize content and technology for use in classrooms.

The professional development phases are undergirded by four themes spanning the entire professional program: (1) teacher as reflective practitioner, (2) technology, (3) content specialties, and (4) assessment through a professional portfolio. Activities required of students in each of these themes are designed to follow the developmental phase process.

In retrospect, the formation and nurturing of the collaborative has been the "glue" that held the redesign process together. The development of a common vision of a new kind of teacher preparation program for secondary teachers was a powerful motivator that enabled the members to eventually put aside personal and discipline-centered interests.

Laboratory Activities for the Redesigned Secondary Program

Early in the redesign process a commitment was made to connect what might be otherwise "inert" university content and pedagogical knowledge to classroom teaching problems. Classroom connections between university and public schools would be an

integral and essential part of the program from the beginning until the completion of student teaching. To accomplish this would require a field-based approach such that at every phase the best of theory would be tested against the practices within the classroom, school, and community, each serving as laboratories for the program.

Pilot Studies and Research Support

Research through pilot studies was conducted to test the redesign structure and collaborative framework. The pilot studies were part of a number of benchmarks used to measure progress toward establishing a restructured secondary education program. During the fall 1994 semester, pilot classes within Phase Three of the framework were conducted on-site in both junior high school and senior school settings. Students had full afternoon field experiences with middle school teachers for one-half of the semester with the university course taught on-site in the middle school. Students then had full afternoon field experiences with senior school teachers for the other half of the semester with the university course taught on-site in the senior school. The on-site course enabled public school teachers and administrators to become involved in the instruction.

Evaluation protocols using a Likert scale were designed to evaluate student perceptions in the pilot classes. Results indicated that the field-based courses were seen as very important to the students, with 91% of the students strongly agreeing and agreeing; 92% were in favor of the two-level experience. Because of the experience, 81% felt they could now make a commitment to the principles of professional, moral, and ethical behavior expected of a member of the teaching profession.

The pilot studies provided evidence of the operationalizing of the Goodlad postulates which were central to the redesigned program. Specifically these future teachers were provided opportunities to move beyond being students of organized knowledge; they became more other-oriented in identifying with a culture of teaching; they gained the habit of inquiring into the nature of teaching and schooling; they became committed to professional, moral, and ethical behaviors expected of teachers; and they better linked

research and theory to actual practice and the problems arising out of conflicts in these areas.

Developing a Secondary Professional Development School

How does a school in a large metropolitan area such as Houston noted for its academic excellence maintain that excellence in a changing school population? How does such a school address the increasing problems students experience in learning? How does a school develop processes and procedures that enable teachers to experience success with an economically and ethnically diverse student population? These were questions that caused a felt-need to develop among the faculty in a Houston area high school.

How does a research I university moving toward field-based teacher education programs and located in College Station, a somewhat rural community, provide for its students circumstances that are similar to those the students will face in their teaching careers? How does a research I university whose preservice teacher education population still remains largely anglo best prepare those students to successfully teach an economically and ethnically diverse public school population? These were questions that challenged Texas A&M University.

It is out of such needs on the part of these institutions that the purpose for a partnership arose. Thus the high school partnership developed in a unique way, for faculty both at the high school and at Texas A&M University put aside personal and discipline-centered interests for the goal of providing best instruction and teachers for our youth. Providing best instruction and teachers for our youth therefore became the framework within which open and sincere conversations over a period of time built the foundation for mutual trust and made possible the partnership.

The resultant secondary professional development school was established as a Center of Inquiry, becoming a laboratory for maintaining a climate in which students value academic achievement; for maintaining a faculty that is continually growing, improving,

and grappling with challenges presented by a changing population; and for maintaining opportunities for preservice experiences for secondary teacher education students.

Discussion

The redesign of the Texas A&M University Secondary Education Program begun in 1993 reflects how a grass-roots approach that is collaborative in nature can be proactive in addressing the many needs teachers face now and into the 21st century. And it is significant that the collaborative process began with a felt-need for change by those most closely associated with the day-to-day responsibilities for preparing secondary teachers. The resulting Secondary Education Collaborative Model has provided a structure in which a commitment has been made to secondary teacher education from the view that teacher education ownership resides exclusively neither in a school district nor in a university but is a collaborative process whose only goal is to provide the best instruction and the best teachers for our youth. In making that collaborative effort, both the school and the university are renewed.

Working together to solve educational problems also makes clear the strengths of both school and university faculty. A recognition of the commonalities among the different institutional cultures begins to outweigh their differences. A collegial relationship soon develops through program presentations and scholarly publications in which representatives of both cultures share their work.

Making a professional development school central to an organization provides a greater challenge, especially when a school is large and its faculty and staff approach 200. Enlarging the involvement of teachers in the school is necessary.

Initiating a professional development school, however, is a slow process and hard work. Universities and public schools run on different "clocks" and calendar and time differences must be worked through in a mutually beneficial manner.

Starting with small activities that involve mutual interests allows for progress to be made. Less is more is an important recognition, for overly ambitious initial undertaking that may not bear fruit can affect the likelihood of building a successful PDS.

Integrating the professional development school representatives into the Secondary Education Collaborative strengthens both the collaborative and the possibility of increasing the number of PDS's needed for program implementation.

Most important is making the Secondary Education Collaborative central to the implementation of the redesigned program and to the development of PDS's and as the permanent body in the evaluation and modification of the program as the institutions work together in a never-ending future.

References

Clift, R. T. & Say, M. (1988). Teacher education: Collaboration or conflict? Journal of Teacher Education, 39, 207.

Hawley, W. D., Austin, A. E. & Goldman, E. S. (1988). Changing the education of teachers. Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board.

Maeroff, G. (1983). School and college. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). A nation at risk: The Imperative for educational reform. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Nelson, Jenny. (June 30, 1997). "Bryan council told of changes in demographics," Bryan/College Station Eagle, 2-3.